

PRESS RELEASE

18 June 1992

ISLAMIC COUNCIL CALLS FOR JUSTICE IN ALGERIA

In a press release issued today, the Islamic Council revealed that its Secretary General, Mr Salem Azzam, has written to the Chairman of the Higher Council of State now governing Algeria, Mr Mohamed Boudiaf, calling upon him to release all political prisoners, to call off the impending trials of the leaders of FIS, among others, which are scheduled to open on 27 June, to close down all detention camps and to encourage a positive dialogue among all political parties, including FIS, in an effort to defuse the extremely tense situation currently pertaining in Algeria. Mr Azzam went on to appeal for free and fair elections to be held so that the people of Algeria can, as is their right, choose the government they want.

The Secretary General wrote that the Islamic Council stood firmly for political stability in Algeria as this was indispensable for the economic and social progress of the country and its people and that the responsibility for hardships, economic and other, suffered by the people as a result of the continuation of the present tension would rest squarely with the Higher State Council. Mr Boudiaf was urged to follow policies which are in the best interests of Algeria, its people and the Muslim Ummah.

The Islamic Council added that recently the Secretary General has also contacted human rights organisations, newspaper editors and lawyers' groups concerning the forthcoming trials in Algeria, because it is feared that they will not conform to any normally accepted international standards of justice, asking them to monitor the proceedings and, if appropriate and possible, to send observers to the trials. In one reply, Mr Ian Martin, its Secretary General, has said that Amnesty International is planning to send a lawyer to observe the trials, and Lord Avebury, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, in response to Mr Azzam's letter has written to the Algerian Ambassador to London seeking many assurances on the legal proceedings of the trials and has also asked the Director of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation in Washington to do likewise.

The Islamic Council said that it would do its best in cooperation with other organisations to put pressure on the Algerian authorities for the realisation of the aims expressed in this statement.